

By being peeuish? I tell thee what *Antonio*,  
I loue thee, and it is my loue that speakes:  
There are a sort of men, whose visages  
Do creame and mantle like a standing pond,  
And do a wilfull stillnesse entertaine,  
With purpose to be drest in an opinion  
Of wisdom, grauity, profound conceit,  
As who should say, I am fit an Oracle,  
And when I ope my lips, let no dogge bark.  
O my *Antonio*, I do know of these  
That therefore onely are reputed wise,  
For saying nothing; when I am verie sure  
If they should speake, would almost dam those eares:  
Which hearing them would call their brothers fooles:  
Ile tell thee more of this another time.  
But fish not with this melancholly baite  
For this foole Gudgeon, this opinion:  
Come good *Lorenzo*, faryewell a while,  
Ile end my exhortation after dinner.

*Lor.* Well, we will leaue you then till dinner time.  
I must be one of these same dumbe wise men,  
For *Gratiano* neuer let me speake.

*Gra.* Well, keepe me company but two yeares mo,  
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine owne tongue.

*Ant.* Far you well, Ile grow a talker for this geare.

*Gra.* Thanks ifaith, for silence is onely commendable  
In a neats tongue dri'd, and a maid not vendible. *Exit.*

*Ant.* It is that any thing now.

*Bass.* *Gratiano* speaks an infinite deale of nothing,  
more then any man in all Venice, his reasons are two  
graines of wheate hid in two bushels of chaffe: you shall  
seeke all day ere you finde them, & when you haue them  
they are not worth the search.

*Ant.* Well: tel me now, what Lady is the same  
To whom you swore a secret Pilgrimage  
That you to day promis'd to tel me of?

*Bass.* Tis not vnknowne to you *Antonio*  
How much I haue disabled mine estate,  
By something shewing a more swelling port  
Then my faint meanes would grant continuance:  
Nor do I now make mone to be abridg'd  
From such a noble rate, but my cheefe care  
Is to come fairely off from the great debts  
Wherein my time something too prodigall  
Hath left me gag'd: to you *Antonio*  
I owe the most in money, and in loue,  
And from your loue I haue a warrantie  
To vnburthen all my plots and purposes,  
How to get cleere of all the debts I owe.

*Ant.* I pray you good *Bassanio* let me know it,  
And if it stand as you your selfe still do,  
Within the eye of honour, be assur'd  
My purse, my person, my extreamest meanes  
Lye all vnlock'd to your occasions.

*Bass.* In my schoole dayes, when I had lost one shaft  
I shot his fellow of the selfesame flight  
The selfesame way, with more aduised watch  
To finde the other forth, and by aduenturing both,  
I oft found both. I urge this child-hood proofe,  
Because what followes is pure innocence.  
I owe you much, and like a wilfull youth,  
That which I owe is lost: but if you please  
To shoote another arrow that selfe way  
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,  
As I will watch the ayne: Or to finde both,  
Or bring your latter hazard backe againe,

And thankfully rest debter for the first.

*Ant.* You know me well, and herein spend but time  
To winde about my loue with circumstance,  
And out of doubt you doe more wrong  
In making question of my vttermoost  
Then if you had made waste of all I haue:  
Then doe but say to me what I should doe  
That in your knowledge may by me be done,  
And I am prest vnto it: therefore speake.

*Bass.* In *Belmont* is a Lady richly left,  
And she is faire, and fairer then that word,  
Of wondrous vertues, sometimes from her eyes  
I did receiue faire speechlesse messages:  
Her name is *Portia*, nothing vnderuallawd  
To *Cato's* daughter, *Brutus Portia*,  
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,  
For the foure windes blow in from euery coast  
Renowned futors, and her sunny locks  
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,  
Which makes her seat of *Belmont* *Cholcher* strand,  
And many *Lafons* come in quest of her.  
O my *Antonio*, had I but the meanes  
To hold a riuall place with one of them,  
I haue a minde prefaces me such thrift,  
That I should questionlesse be fortunate.

*Ant.* Thou knowst that all my fortunes are at sea,  
Neither haue I money, nor commodity  
To raise a present summe, therefore goe forth  
Try what my credit can in Venice doe,  
That shall be racke euen to the vttermoost,  
To furnish thee to *Belmont* to faire *Portia*.  
Goe presently enquire, and so will I  
Where money is, and I no question make  
To haue it of my trust, or for my sake. *Exit.*

*Enter Portia with her waiting woman Nerissa.*

*Portia.* By my troth *Nerissa*, my little body is a we-  
ric of this great world.

*Ner.* You would be sweet Madam, if your miseries  
were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are:  
and yet for ought I see, they are as sicke that surset with  
too much, as they that starue with nothing: it is no small  
happinesse therefore to bee seated in the meane, super-  
fluitie comes sooner by white haire, but competencie  
liues longer.

*Portia.* Good sentences, and well pronounc'd.

*Ner.* They would be better if well followed.

*Portia.* If to doe were as easie as to know what were  
good to doe, Chappels had bene Churches, and poore  
mens cottages Princes Pallaces: it is a good Diuine that  
followes his owne instructions; I can easie teach twen-  
tie what were good to be done, then be one of the twen-  
tie to follow mine owne teaching: the braine may de-  
uise lawes for the blood, but a hot temper leapes o're a  
colde decree, such a hare is madnesse the youth, to skip  
o're the meshes of good counsaile the cripple; but this  
reason is not in fashion to chooseth me a husband: O mee,  
the word chooseth, I may neither chooseth whom I would,  
nor refuse whom I dislike, so is the wil of a liuing daugh-  
ter curb'd by the will of a dead father: it is not hard *Ner-  
rissa*, that I cannot chooseth one, nor refuse none.

*Ner.* Your father was euer vertuous, and holy men  
at their death haue good inspirations, therefore the lot-  
teric that hee hath deuised in these three chests of gold,  
siluer, and leade, whereof who chooseth his meaning,  
chooseth

chooseth you, wil no doubt neuer be chosen by any right-  
ly, but one who you shall rightly loue: but what warmth  
is there in your affection towards any of these Princely  
futors that are already come?

*Por.* I pray thee ouer-name them, and as thou namest  
them, I will describe them, and according to my descrip-  
tion leuell at my affection.

*Ner.* First there is the Neopolitane Prince.

*Por.* I that's a coltindeede, for he doth nothing but  
talke of his horse, and hee makes it a great appropria-  
tion to his owne good parts that he can shoo him him-  
selfe: I am much afraid my Ladie his mother plaid false  
with a Smyth.

*Ner.* Than is there the Countie Palentine.

*Por.* He doth nothing but frowne (as who should  
say, and you will not haue me, chooseth: he heares merrie  
tales and smiles not, I feare hee will proue the weeping  
Philosopher when he growes old, being so full of vn-  
mannely sadnesse in his youth.) I had rather to be marri-  
ed to a death's head with a bone in his mouth, then to ei-  
ther of these: God defend me from these two.

*Ner.* How say you by the French Lord, Mounfier  
*Le Boune*?

*Por.* God made him, and therefore let him passe for a  
man, in truth I know it is a sinne to be a mocker, but he,  
why he hath a horse better then the Neopolitans, a bet-  
ter bad habite of frowning then the Count Palentine, he  
is euery man in no man, if a Trassell sing, he fals straight  
a capring, he will fence with his own shadow. If I should  
marry him, I should marry twentie husbands: if hee  
would despise me, I would forgiue him, for if he loue me  
to madnesse, I should neuer requite him.

*Ner.* What say you then to *Fauconbridge*, the yong  
Baron of England?

*Por.* You know I say nothing to him, for hee vnder-  
stands not me, nor I him: he hath neither *Latine*, *French*,  
nor *Italian*, and you will come into the Court & weare  
that I haue a poore pennie-worth in the *English*: hee is a  
proper mans picture, but alas who can conuerse with a  
dumbe show? how odly he is suited, I thinke he bought  
his doublet in *Italie*, his round hose in *France*, his bonnet  
in *Germanie*, and his behauiour euery where.

*Ner.* What thinke you of the other Lord his neigh-  
bour?

*Por.* That he hath a neighbourly charitie in him, for  
he borrowed a boxe of the eare of the *Englishman*, and  
swore he would pay him againe when hee was able: I  
thinke the *Frenchman* became his suretie, and seald vnder  
for another.

*Ner.* How like you the yong *Germaine*, the Duke of  
*Saxones* Nephew?

*Por.* Very vildely in the morning when hee is sober,  
and most vildely in the afternoone when hee is drunke:  
when he is best, he is a little worse then a man, and when  
he is worst, he is little better then a beast: and the worst  
fall that euer fell, I hope I shall make shift to goe with-  
out him.

*Ner.* If he should offer to chooseth, and chooseth the right  
Casket, you should refuse to performe your Fathers will,  
if you should refuse to accept him.

*Por.* Therefore for feare of the worst, I pray thee set  
a deepe glasse of *Reinisch*-wine on the contrary Casket,  
for if the diuell be within, and that temptation without,  
I know he will chooseth it. I will doe any thing *Nerissa*  
ere I will be married to a sponge.

*Ner.* You neede not feare Lady the hauing any of

these Lords, they haue acqui-  
minations, which is indeede  
and to trouble you with no  
be won by some other sort  
on, depending on the Casket.

*Por.* If I liue to be as olde  
chaste as *Diana*: vntesse I b  
of my Fathers will: I am gl  
are so reasonable, for there  
I doate on his verie absence  
parture.

*Ner.* Doe you not reme  
thers time, a *Venecian*, a Sch  
came hither in companie of  
ferrat?

*Por.* Yes, yes, it was *Bassanio*  
call'd.

*Ner.* True Madam, hee  
foolish eyes look'd vpon, wa  
Lady.

*Por.* I remember him well  
thy of thy praise.

*Enter a Seruant.*

*Ser.* The foure Strangers  
their leaue: and there is a for  
the Prince of *Morocco*, who b  
Maister will be here to night.

*Por.* If I could bid the fi  
heart as I can bid the other fe  
glad of his approach: if he ha  
and the complexion of a diue  
shrine me then wile me. Cor  
whiles wee shut the gate v  
knocks at the doore.

*Enter Bassanio with S*

*Shy.* Three thousand duc  
*Bass.* I sir, for three month

*Shy.* For three months, w

*Bass.* For the which, as I t

*Antonio* shall be bound.

*Shy.* *Antonio* shall becom

*Bass.* May you sted me?

*Shy.* I know your answer.

*Shy.* Three thousand duc

and *Antonio* bound.

*Bass.* Your answer to th

*Shy.* *Antonio* is a good m

*Bass.* Haue you heard an

trary.

*Shy.* Ho no, no, no, no: m

good man, is to haue you vne

ent, yet his meanes are in sup

he bound to Tripolis, ano

stand moreouer vpon the Ry

co, a fourth for England, an

squandred abroad, but ships

men, there be land rats, and

and land theeues, I meane Py

perrill of wagers, windes, and

standing sufficient, three thou

take his bond.

*Bass.* Be assured you may